



## **Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Active Transportation Safety Act of 2023**

On August 25, 2022, Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, a U.S. diplomat and mother of two, had just been evacuated from Ukraine by the U.S. government, when she decided to ride her bike home from her childrens' new elementary school in Bethesda, Maryland. She never made it there. Forced to ride a for a short while in an unprotected bike lane on a state highway, she was killed when the driver of a semi-truck turned into her, striking and crushing her.

"Sarah fled a war zone only to die on the streets near our nation's capital," said Dan Langenkamp, Sarah's husband. "There is simply no reason in the world why deciding to ride a bike in the United States should be a life or death decision. We have to do better."

### **THE NEED FOR COMPLETE ROUTE NETWORKS**

While drivers are responsible for operating safely around cyclists and pedestrians, fixing gaps in infrastructure presents opportunities to build safe systems for all road users.

While ambitious plans to build complete cycling networks exist in many communities, plans have often been stymied because communities do not have the matching funds required for federal grants for active transportation infrastructure. Los Angeles, for example, has built only 3 percent of the bike-lane plan it adopted seven years ago, resulting in short, disconnected, and confusing lanes.

The same is true all over the country, with current infrastructure presenting serious dangers that have led to the highest levels of pedestrian and cyclist death seen in nearly 30 years. Such dangers discourage biking and walking and contribute to inequities in transportation.

### **OUR LEGISLATION**

The Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Active Transportation Safety Act honors Sarah's memory by encouraging state and local governments to build safer, more complete, networks for bicycling and walking, and makes it easier to build connections between safe biking and walking infrastructure. The bill:

- Unlocks Highway Safety Improvement Program funding for projects that connect two pieces of safe cycling infrastructure.
- Allows local governments to identify active transportation projects eligible for Highway Safety Improvement Program funding.
- Allows bicyclist and pedestrian safety projects to be fully federally funded, ensuring all communities can take advantage of these new eligibilities and encouraging communities to undertake more bicyclist and pedestrian safety projects.

**Supporting Organizations:** League of American Bicyclists, Safe Routes National Partnership, Families for Safe Streets